



# Floor Wardens

## A Factsheet for Members of a High Rise Emergency Team

**T**rained emergency team members can make a significant difference in the success of a building fire response plan. Floor wardens are on the front lines of emergency response when a fire occurs. High rise buildings in particular benefit from the actions of these members of the emergency response team.

### Floor Wardens Duties

The primary role of floor wardens is to lead the evacuation of occupants from the floor during a fire alarm. Their quick actions, clear thinking and calm leadership are vital to ensuring the safety of building occupants during a fire emergency.

#### Begin Evacuation

Upon activation of the alarm, floor wardens should quickly tour the floor and alert all occupants that a fire alarm has sounded and evacuation is required. Particular attention should be paid to isolated offices and individuals who may be deaf or hard of hearing. An assertive manner and authoritative voice will help motivate those who are hesitant about evacuating. Instruct occupants to use the exit stairwells, not the elevators, to evacuate the floor.

#### Close Doors

While checking the floor and alerting occupants, the floor warden should also close the doors to all rooms. Closing doors helps prevent fire spread, as well as limiting the spread of smoke and toxic gases.

#### Meeting Place Reminder

As tenants exit the floor, floor wardens should remind them to stay to the right of the stairwell

and where their designated meeting place is. It is also a good idea to remind people not to enter a floor where the alarm is sounding and to remain at the meeting place until notified.

#### Inform Fire Safety Director Or Fire Department Of Problems

Persons remaining on the floor or in the stairwell should be reported to the building's Fire Safety Director as soon as possible. Who will then ensure that firefighters are sent to assist those in need if evacuation is required.

#### Assign Assistants To Those Persons Who Use Wheelchairs

Two persons (and alternates) should be assigned to each individual whose limited mobility would prevent their evacuating by way of the exit stairwells. This should be done before a fire emergency so that all three persons will have time to become familiar with their course of action.

#### For Persons Unable To Use Exit Stairs

Persons who are unable to negotiate exit stairs should review the following items:

- Wait near the exit stairwell until everyone has evacuated the floor and traffic in the stairwell has cleared.

- Enter the stairwell with your two assistants and wait on the landing. Make sure that the door is securely closed.
- Wait for further instructions. The Fire Department will send firefighters to assist you if evacuation is necessary.
- If you are waiting in the stairwell and traffic again builds from the evacuation of upper floors, re-enter your floor to allow others to pass.
- Assistants should not attempt to carry you down the stairs unless conditions in the stairwell become threatening. If conditions do deteriorate, the assistants can then carry you to a safer area.
- If you do not have persons to wait with you, or if there are too many individuals to wait on the landing, an area of refuge should be sought on the floor. See the other sidebar for details on your area of refuge.

### For More Information

Seattle Fire Department  
Public Education Office  
206-386-1337  
[www.cityofseattle.gov/fire](http://www.cityofseattle.gov/fire)